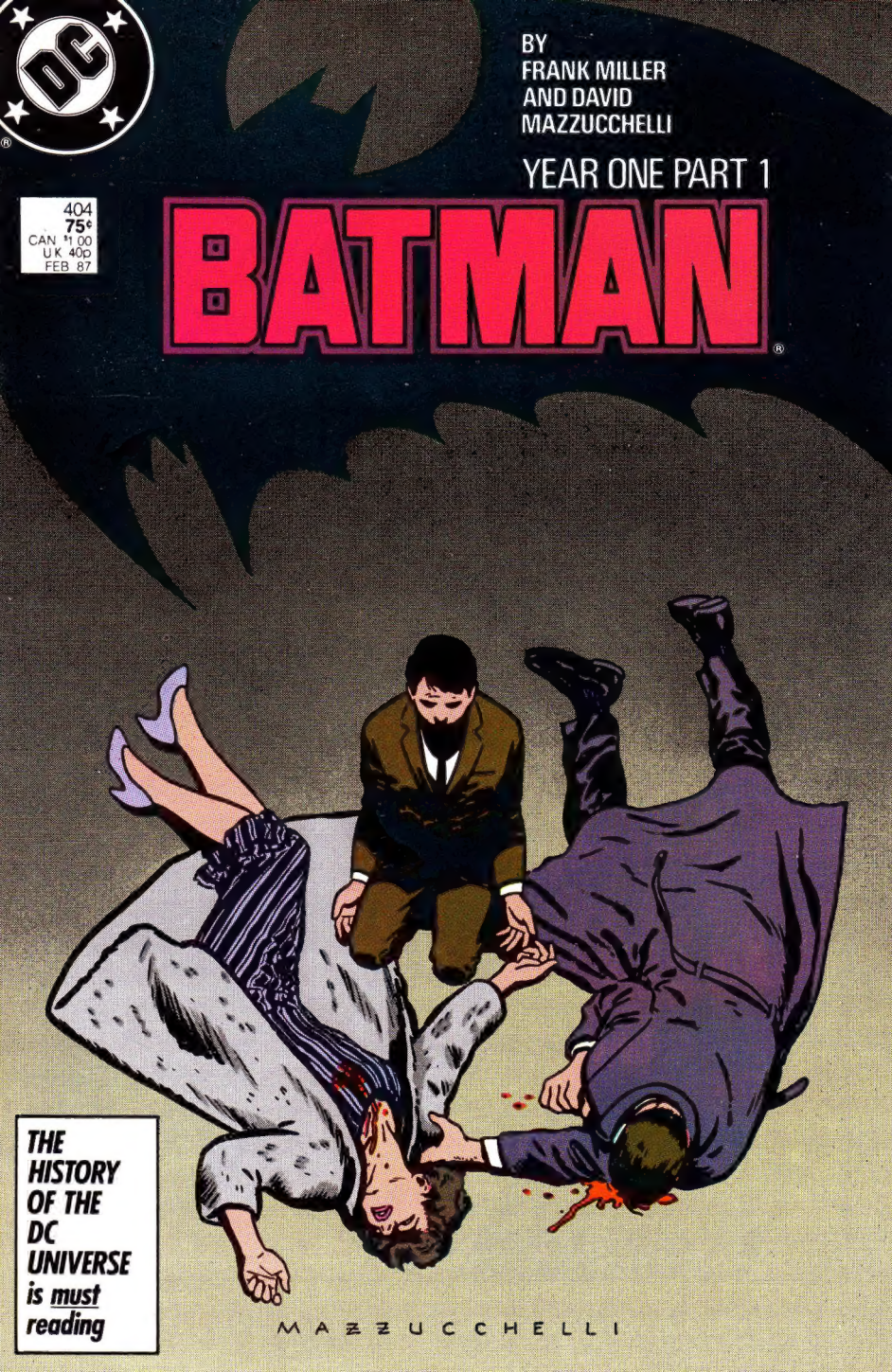
BY
FRANK MILLER
AND DAVID
MAZZUCCHELLI
YEAR ONE PART 1
BATMAN
404
75¢
CAN $1.00
U.K. 40p
FEB. 87
THE HISTORY OF THE DC UNIVERSE is must reading
MAZZUCCHELLI

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greatest crimefighter
the world has ever known...

It won't be easy.

BATMAN®
YEAR ONE

BY
FRANK MILLER
AND
DAVID MAZZUCCHELLI

Adapted from the works of
Bob Kane, Bill Finger
and Jerry Robinson

CHAPTER ONE:
WHO I AM
HOW I COME TO BE

Richmond Lewis: Colorist
Todd Klein: Letterer
Denny O'Neil: Editor

Batman created by Bob Kane

G-2835

Twelve hours. My stomach's been trying to eat itself for the last five.
Barbara's flying in. I don't care how much it costs.
Train's no way to come to Gotham...

...BEGINNING OUR FINAL DESCENT TO GOTHAM CITY. PLEASE RETURN SEATS AND TRAYS TO THEIR UPRIGHT POSITIONS...
From here, it's clean shafts of concrete and snowy rooftops. The work of men who died generations ago.
From here, it looks like an achievement.

I should have taken the train. I should be closer.

I should see the enemy.

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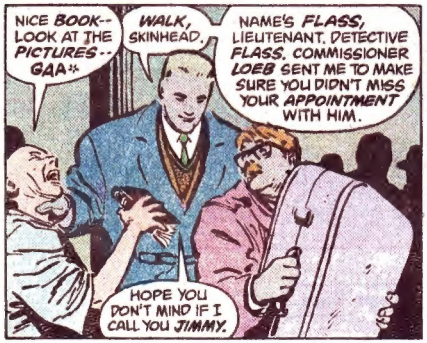
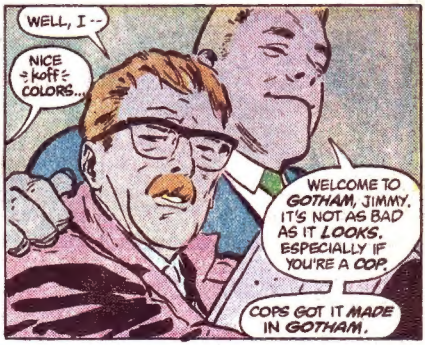
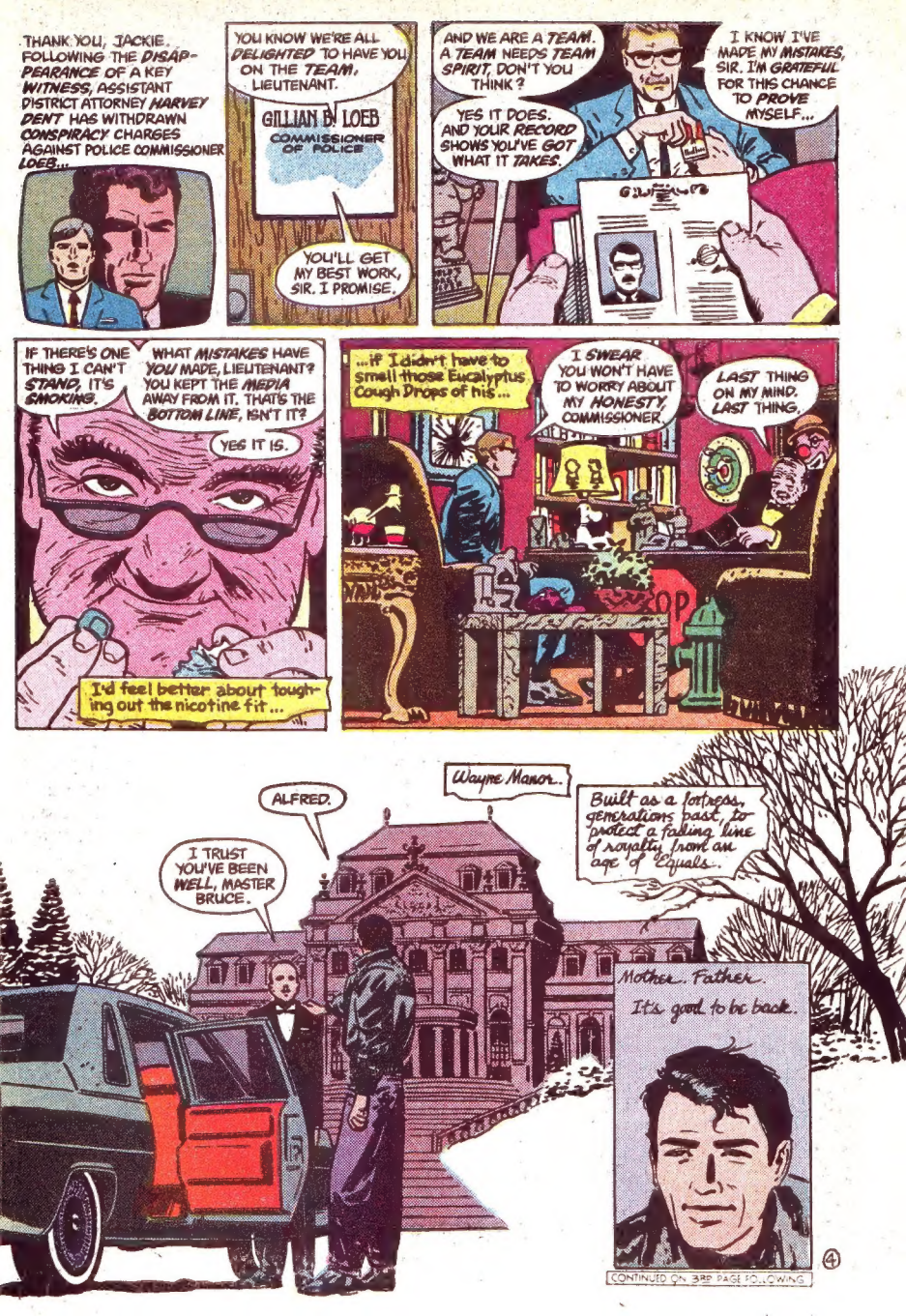
D.C. Comics Inc. A Warner Communications Company

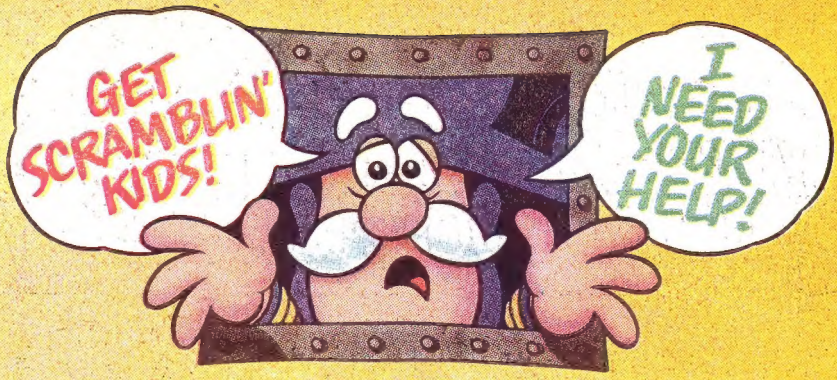
By now Barbara's gotten her tests back. I only hate myself a little for hoping they came out negative.
This is no place to raise a family.
NICE BOOK FOR A SMALL DONATION--
NO, PLEASE--
GORDON!
LIEUTENANT JAMES GORDON!


NICE BOOK--LOOK AT THE PICTURES--GAA*
WALK, SKINHEAD.
NAME'S FLASS, LIEUTENANT, DETECTIVE FLASS. COMMISSIONER LOEB SENT ME TO MAKE SURE YOU DIDN'T MISS YOUR APPOINTMENT WITH HIM.
HOPE YOU DON'T MIND IF I CALL YOU JIMMY.


WELL, I--
NICE *koff* COLORS...
WELCOME TO GOTHAM, JIMMY. IT'S NOT AS BAD AS IT LOOKS. ESPECIALLY IF YOU'RE A COP.
COPS GOT IT MADE IN GOTHAM.

--WELCOME HOME, MR. WAYNE--
--HOW'S IT FEEL TO BE BACK--
--PRINCESS CAROLINE--
--ANY PLANS, MR. WAYNE--
--ANY TRUTH TO THE RUMORS--
THE TWENTY-FIVE-YEAR-OLD HEIR TO THE WAYNE MILLIONS DECLINED TO COMMENT ON RUMORS OF ROMANCE IN HIS LIFE...
...OR ON HIS PLANS ON HIS RETURN TO GOTHAM AFTER TWELVE YEARS ABROAD. WE'LL KEEP YOU POSTED ON GOTHAM'S RICHEST--AND BEST LOOKING--NATIVE SON, TOM?
3


THANK YOU, JACKIE. FOLLOWING THE DISAPPEARANCE OF A KEY WITNESS, ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY HARVEY DENT HAS WITHDRAWN CONSPIRACY CHARGES AGAINST POLICE COMMISSIONER LOEB...
YOU KNOW WE'RE ALL DELIGHTED TO HAVE YOU ON THE TEAM, LIEUTENANT.
GILLIAN B. LOEB
COMMISSIONER OF POLICE
YOU'LL GET MY BEST WORK, SIR. I PROMISE.
AND WE ARE A TEAM. A TEAM NEEDS TEAM SPIRIT, DON'T YOU THINK?
YES IT DOES. AND YOUR RECORD SHOWS YOU'VE GOT WHAT IT TAKES.
I KNOW I'VE MADE MY MISTAKES, SIR. I'M GRATEFUL FOR THIS CHANCE TO PROVE MYSELF...
IF THERE'S ONE THING I CAN'T STAND, IT'S SMOKING.
WHAT MISTAKES HAVE YOU MADE, LIEUTENANT? YOU KEPT THE MEDIA AWAY FROM IT. THAT'S THE BOTTOM LINE, ISN'T IT?
YES IT IS.
I'd feel better about toughing out the nicotine fit...
...if I didn't have to smell those Eucalyptus Cough Drops of his...
I SWEAR YOU WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT MY HONESTY, COMMISSIONER.
LAST THING ON MY MIND. LAST THING.
Wayne Manor..
Built as a fortress, generations past, to protect a failing line of royalty from an age of Equals..
ALFRED.
I TRUST YOU'VE BEEN WELL, MASTER BRUCE.
Mother.. Father.
It's good to be back.
CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING
4



Oh, it can't be! That evil (SESAMGORT) ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ has captured (P'NAC HURNCC) ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐☐☐! Now, shut behind a (OROD) ☐☐☐☐☐, locked with a (EKY) ☐☐☐, our hero is trapped somewhere in (DOSNALG) ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐!

Can you help free the Cap'n? Boxes of Cap'n Crunch Cereal have exciting games, clues, and secret phone numbers to tell you how! If you do free him, you could win a share of $1,000,000! But hurry! Or Cap'n Crunch and his (NURCCH WROPE) ☐☐☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐☐☐ may be finished!

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ANSWERS: Sopmester, Capt'n Crunch, Door, Key, Soaring, Crunch Power

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THEN, THE MAN OF STEEL
NOW, DC DOES IT AGAIN!

GEORGE PÉREZ
GREG POTTER & BRUCE PATTERSON
INTRODUCE THE NEW WONDER WOMAN

COMING NOVEMBER 6TH

DC

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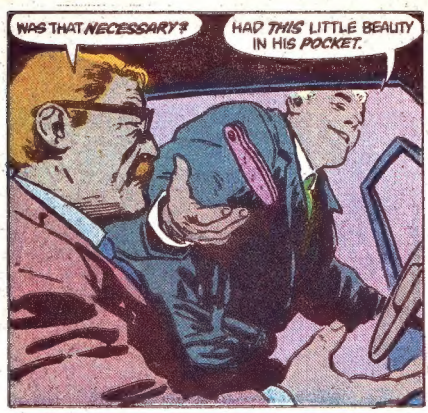
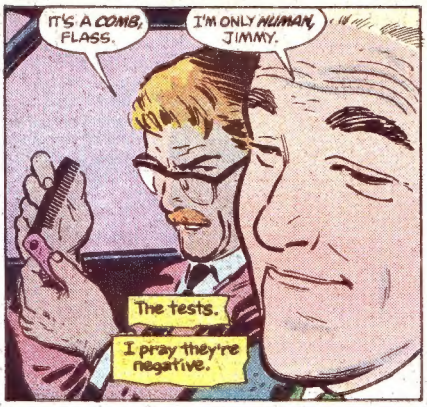
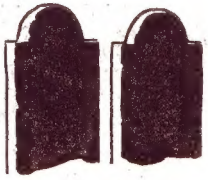
KNEW YOU'D LIKE THE COMMISSIONER, JIMMY.
AND HE'LL BE JUST AS GOOD TO YOU AS YOU ARE TO HIM, YOU CAN COUNT ON THAT...
I keep telling myself it's either this or pumping gas...
...then I tell myself I'm doing it for Barbara...
SCREEECHH
FLASS-- WHAT'S--
NOTHING I CAN'T HANDLE SOLO, JIMMY.
MOTHER KNOW YOU'RE HERE, STEVIE?
OH, MAN...
...NOT DOING ANYTH--
WHUKK
I keep talking to myself. This time I say you'd better know your facts before you bring another cop down.
Especially in public.
Flass has had Green Beret training. I can tell. And he knows how to use his size.
I watch and I don't do a damn thing and I memorize every move.
For future reference.

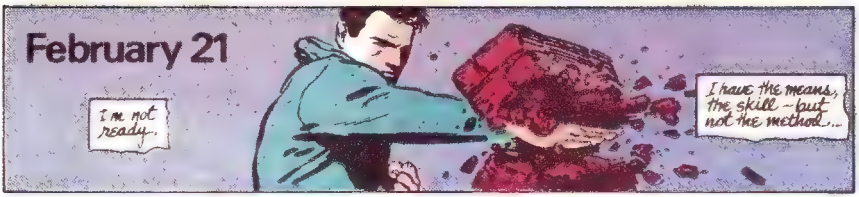

WAS THAT NECESSARY?
HAD THIS LITTLE BEAUTY IN HIS POCKET.


IT'S A COMB, FLASS.
I'M ONLY HUMAN, JIMMY.
The tests.
I pray they're negative.

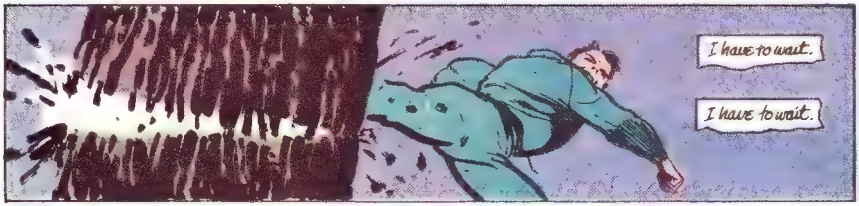


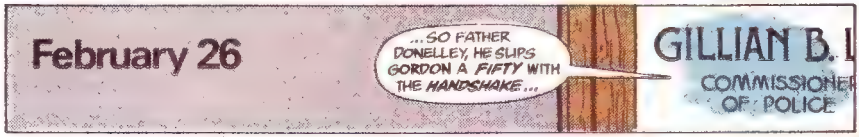
February 12
THE BOYS-- THEY'VE BEEN ASKING ME TO TALK TO YOU, JIMMY. THOUGHT MAYBE I COULD GET A WORD IN, KNOWING HOW TIGHT WE ARE.
THEY'RE WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
I'M TOUCHED, FLASS. BUT RIGHT NOW I'M WORRIED--ABOUT A HOMOCIDE. TURN LEFT.

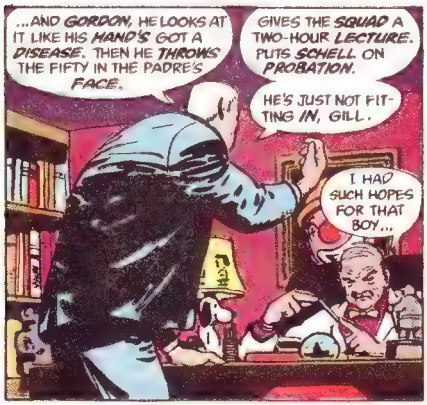
NEVER MAKE IT IN THIS BUSINESS IF YOU DON'T LEARN TO RELAX, JIMMY. I MEAN, WE'VE GOT OUR OWN WAY OF DOING THINGS, HERE IN GOTHAM.
I MEAN, YOU CAME DOWN PRETTY HARD ON MORGAN...
I MEAN, YOU WITH A BABY ON THE WAY...
CALL ME LIEUTENANT. MAKE YOUR NEXT RIGHT.

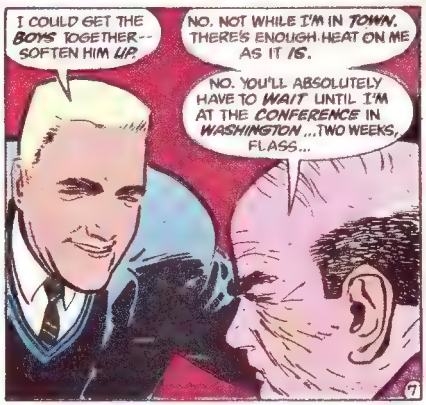

February 21
I'm not ready.
I have the means, the skill -- but not the method...

...no. That's not true. I have hundreds of methods.
But something's missing. Something isn't right.

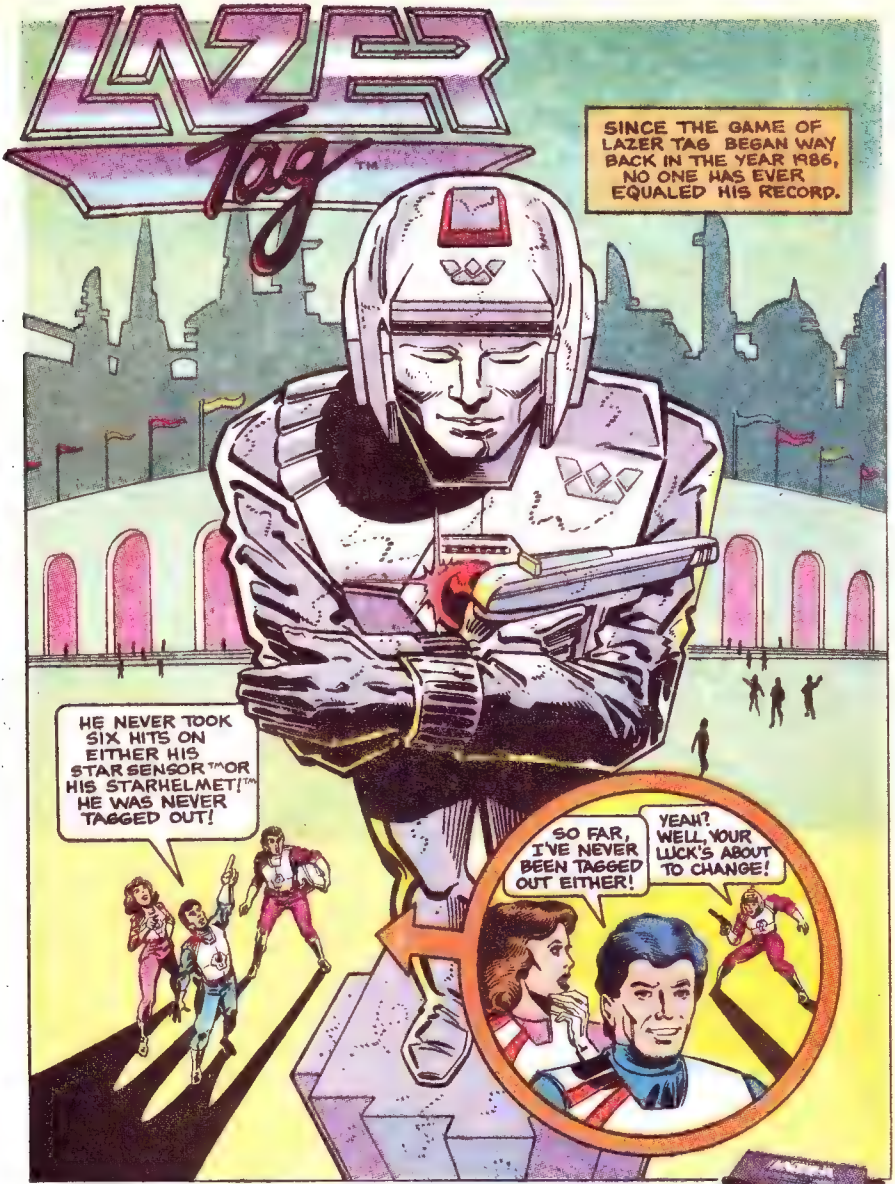

I have to wait.
I have to wait.


February 26
...SO FATHER DONELLEY, HE SLIPS GORDON A FIFTY WITH THE HANDSHAKE...
GILLIAN B. L
COMMISSIONER OF POLICE


...AND GORDON, HE LOOKS AT IT LIKE HIS HAND'S GOT A DISEASE. THEN HE THROWS THE FIFTY IN THE PADRE'S FACE.
GIVES THE SQUAD A TWO-HOUR LECTURE. PUTS SCHELL ON PROBATION.
HE'S JUST NOT FITTING IN, GILL.
I HAD SUCH HOPES FOR THAT BOY...


I COULD GET THE BOYS TOGETHER-- SOFTEN HIM UP.
NO. NOT WHILE I'M IN TOWN. THERE'S ENOUGH HEAT ON ME AS IT IS.
NO. YOU'LL ABSOLUTELY HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL I'M AT THE CONFERENCE IN WASHINGTON ...TWO WEEKS, FLASS...

March 11
The engine hums, gently, not quite convinced it should stop.
Everything is in place. The attendant was even obliging enough to ask me for my autograph. My alibi is set.
Bruce Wayne has been sighted at the same hotel as a visiting Hollywood sex queen. That should generate sufficient rumors--
--to account for my whereabouts for the next few hours.
5
5
This is a reconnaissance mission. Until I know more, I must avoid combat. Until I'm ready...
..my anonymity is an obvious priority. The murder of my parents is a matter of public record.
All it requires is a change in clothing and complexion--
--and a single, memorable, distracting detail.
Requested off this night shift four times now-- damn it, Barbara needs me at night these days, Barbara, and little James...
...so I hope it's a boy. So what.
Four times and no reply. I'm not making friends in the department--
GOING TO WORK, LIEUTENANT?
GOING TO BE LATE.
MAY HAVE TO SKIP THE WHOLE NIGHT.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SO FAR, I'VE NEVER BEEN TAGGED OUT EITHER!
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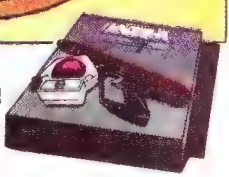
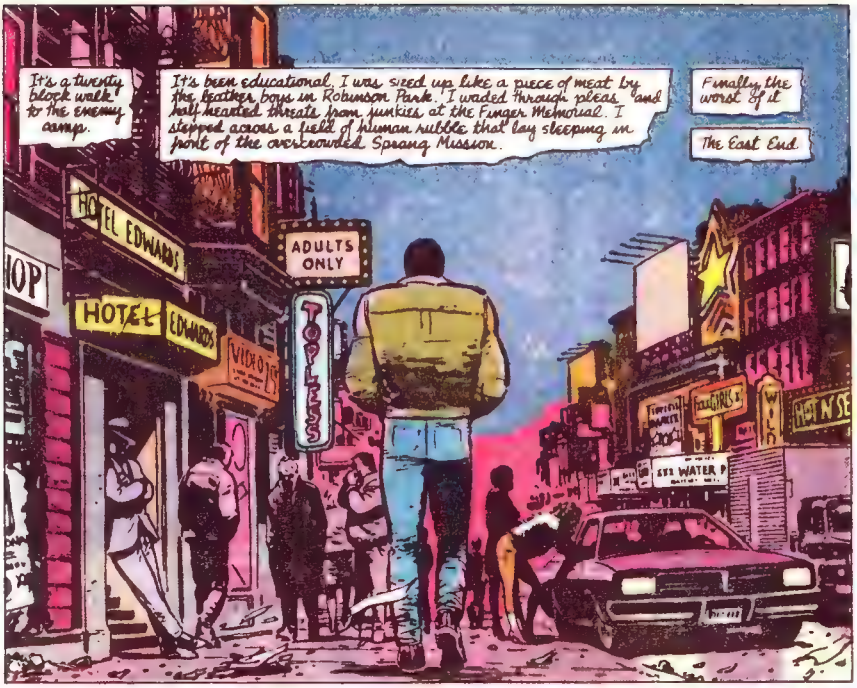


Batteries not included. *Look for Lazer Tag Academy™ Saturday mornings on NBC.* © 1986 Worlds of Wonder, Inc.

LEGENDS
CROSS-OVERS
DON'T MISS THESE EXCITING STORIES!
BLUE BEETLE
THE END OF THE JUSTICE LEAGUE AMERICA
PART TWO OF FOUR
FIRESTORM
ON SALE IN NOVEMBER
DC

Old trick--talking to distract me--
--guarantees an attack from behind--
--should've checked my military record--
--I was taught to handle worse than this--
--but then--
--it's been a while--
Somewhere in the middle of it they tell me it's just a warning.
They remind me that I've got a pregnant wife.
Toward the end I hear a familiar chuckle
Flass.
9


It's a twenty block walk to the enemy camp.
It's been educational. I was sized up like a piece of meat by the leather boys in Robinson Park. I waded through pleas and half hearted threats from junkies at the Finger Memorial. I stepped across a field of human rubble that lay sleeping in front of the overcrowded Spring Mission.
Finally the worst of it
The East End.
HOTEL EDWARDS
ADULTS ONLY
TOPLESS
HOTEL EDWARDS
VICIOUS
XXX WATER P

Hard to believe it's gotten worse.
XXX
ALL NIG
SEXY GIRLS
DEEP SHOW
LESS
G!
ACTION
WILD WILD!!!
XXX
BURL
CHEER YOU UP.
BIG TRIPLE FEATU
1 ALL NIGHT LO
2 SENSUOUS SU
3 EROTIC WON
TOPLESS
GIRL
MORE XXX

I DOUBT IT. HOW OLD ARE YOU?
YOUNG AS YOU WANT ME TO BE.
STUPID B-- THAS ALL WRONG, HOLLY. YOU DOIN' IT WRONG.

DID WHAT YOU SAID. JUST LIKE--
THAS RIGHT, HONEY. BUT YOU GOT TO PICK YOU TYPES. GOT TO KNOW WHICH ONES WANT WHAT YOU GOT.
THIS ONE'S NOT--
I HAVEN'T SAID, HAVE I ?

THAT VICE I SMELL?
THAT CRAZY VET BIT-- THAS OLD, MAN.
I'M NOT THE POLICE.
BELIEVE ME

YOU STILL HERE? TOLD YOU TO GO, HOLLY.
HE HADN'T SAID.
WE TALK THIS OVER LATER, SWEET CHUNKS.
NO...
...I THINK YOU'RE FINISHED WITH HER.
I'm provoking him.
I really shouldn't.
MAN, YOU PUSHIN. YOU ON THE EDGE.
YOU LOOKIN' FOR A NEW SCAR. THAS RIGHT. JUS TELL ME WHERE, MAN...
OH. GEEZ... CAN'T BE VICE. WE'RE PAID UP. JUST SOME IDIOT OUT TO GET HIMSELF KILLED.
SELINA... DON'T STOP NOW...
SHUT UP, SKUNK.
YOU KNOW WHAT I HATE MOST ABOUT MEN, SKUNK?
PLEASE, SELINA... TELL ME... WHY YOU HATE US SO... OH, PLEASE...
NEVER MET ONE.
SAY IT AGAIN...
His eyes keep flicking away from the girls to me. He turns away for a second--
--a dead giveaway--
--he's pretty fast--
11

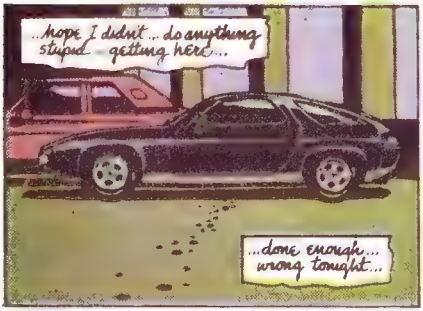
--I won't say he has a chance--
--but he's fast
This is getting a little too good to me--better wrap it up--
XXX ALL NIGHT TOPLESS
GIRLS GIRLS GIRLS !!!
I did--never should have done this--
--have to get out of here before I draw attention--
AAAA
COME ON YOU GUYS--I GOT HIM--
Very good, Bruce.
You've really put the fear of God into them.
DAMN IT
12

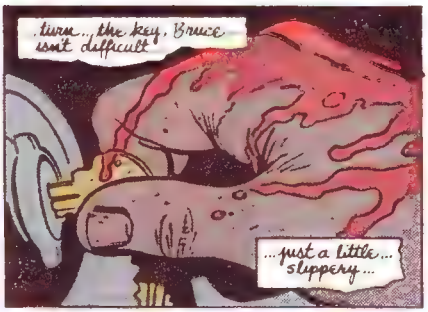
NOBODY HURTS MOLLY--
HURTS, BET HE BROKE MY WRIST--
Mess--made a mess of it--
--no excuse--didn't control myself--
--another one--hissing like a cat--
--looks like she knows what she's doing--be careful--
--that's good--she's had Karate training--
--but only Karate--
EEEEEEEEE
--oh, no--
EEEEEE SKREEECHH
FREEZE--
SELINA GET UP--SELINA--
--if I'm caught--it's over--
13

KBLAMMMM
HEY--HE DIDN'T MOVE, MAN.
HE WAS GOING TO.
--hit an artery--looks bad.--
--get up--before they--
NEEDS A DOCTOR.
MAYBE AFTER HE'S BOOKED.
NNGG
--no--can't let them--
can't
ANY CASH?
COUPLE BUCKS. NO I.D. ...
LOOK, MAN--
--HE'S BLEEDING ALL OVER THE SEAT. WE GOT TO TAKE HIM TO THE HOSPITAL.
YOU LOOK, BOY. I'VE RUN IN A THOUSAND LIKE HIM. DRIFTERS. WHO NEEDS THEM.
IF HE DIES, HE--
YOU TWO.
STOP THE CAR. GET OUT.
WHAT THE HELL...
DON'T MIND HIM, BOY. PROBABLY HOPPED UP ON SOMETHING FAST, Y'KNOW?
I WARNED YOU.
OH MY GOD--HE--
CHINKK

BLAM
WHOKK
SKREEEEEEEE
NO--
LET GO--
NNNNNN
Fire--only take seconds to reach the gas tank--
Sirens--more police--
--tank will go before they get here--!
--these men--they probably have families--
15

SMOKE FROM THE BLAZING POLICE CRUISER CAN BE SEEN FOR BLOCKS... THE TWO OFFICERS WERE FOUND UNCONSCIOUS, THIRTY FEET AWAY...





They did just enough to keep me out of the hospital...
...cant let Barbara see me like this...
DETECTIVE FLASS? HES OFF DUTY, LIEUTENANT. PROBABLY AT THE POKER PARTY OVER AT CHUTES.
WITH THE GUYS.

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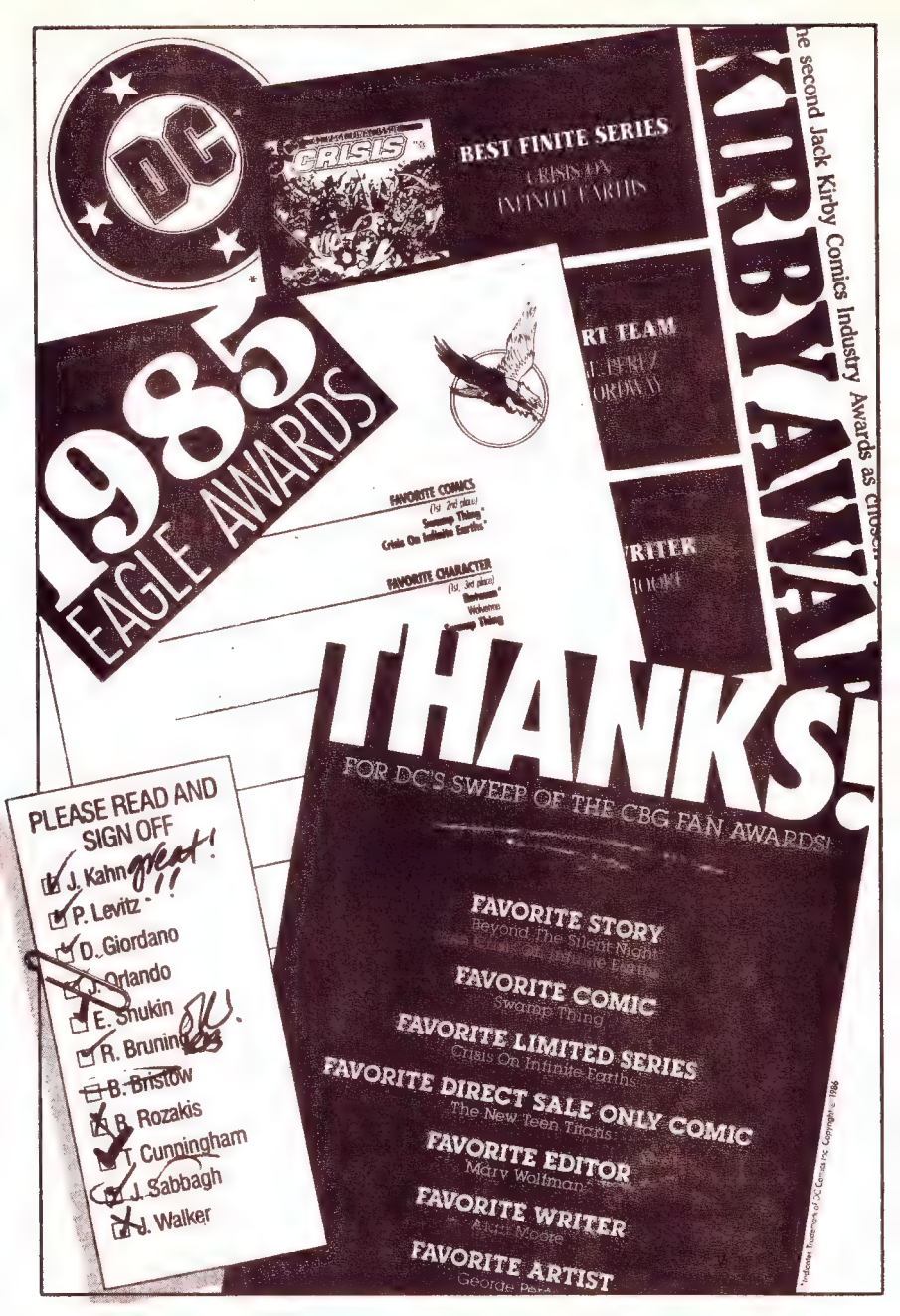
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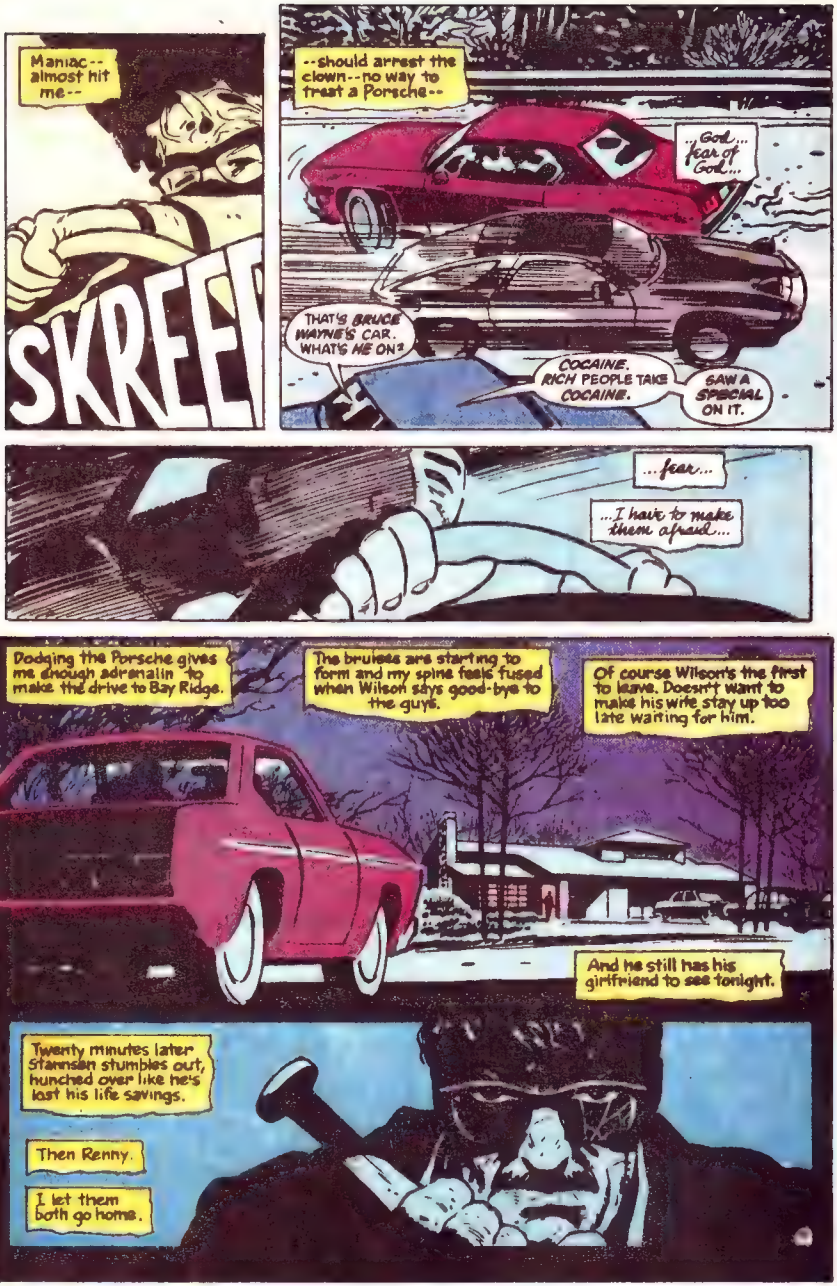
Maniac--almost hit me--
SKREEE
--should arrest the clown--no way to treat a Porsche--
..God... fear of God...
THAT'S BRUCE WAYNE'S CAR. WHAT'S HE ON?
COCAINE. RICH PEOPLE TAKE COCAINE.
SAW A SPECIAL ON IT.
...fear...
...I have to make them afraid...
Dodging the Porsche gives me enough adrenalin to make the drive to Bay Ridge.
The bruises are starting to form and my spine feels fused when Wilson says good-bye to the guys.
Of course Wilson's the first to leave. Doesn't want to make his wife stay up too late waiting for him.
And he still has his girlfriend to see tonight.
Twenty minutes later Stannsen stumbles out, hunched over like he's lost his life savings.
Then Renny.
I let them both go home.

Finally.
Flass.
He staggers to his station wagon and gets in. It only takes him two tries.
I hear his engine start and watch him pull out. He almost flattens the mailbox before he remembers to turn his lights on.
I keep mine off and follow.
I haven't seen a house in three minutes when I pull up beside him and jerk the wheel.
He's ten miles over the speed limit.
Not fast enough to kill him when he hits the tree.
I show him my gun. He says my name and drops his.
He's big.
Green Beret training
It's been fifteen years since I had to take out a Green Beret.
Even so...
...he deserves a handicap.

I don't crack his skull.
GOTHAM HIGH
I don't crush his larynx.
I don't break his ribs or punch my hand through his chest.
I do just enough--
--to keep him out of the hospital.
I toss his gun into the woods. It should be rusty by morning.
I take his clothes off and leave him in his own cuffs by the side of the road.
He'll never report it. Not Flass. He'll make up some story that involves at least ten attackers and never admit I did it.
But he'll know. And he'll stay away from Barbara.
Thanks, Flass.
You've shown me what it takes to be a cop in Gotham City.

Father...
...I'm afraid I may have to die tonight.
I've tried to be patient. I've tried to wait.
But I have to know.
How, father?
How do I do it?
What do I use... to make them afraid?
If I ring this bell, Alfred will come.
He can stop the bleeding, in time.
Another of your gifts to me, father.
I have wealth. The family manor rests above a huge cave that will be the perfect headquarters...
...even a butler with training in combat medicine...
...yes, father. I have everything but patience.
I'd rather die... than wait... another hour.
I have waited... eighteen years...

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MEANWHILE...

Superman's Other Creators

It all began with ACTION COMICS. Superman was the cover featured character for this new title, from what was then called Detective Comics Inc., and it was a hit. ACTION gave us SUPERMAN and WORLD'S FINEST and later SUPERBOY, LOIS LANE and JIMMY OLSEN.

But many people first discovered the Man of Steel in other places. In my last column, I talked about the thrill of coming home from school and ending my afternoons with a glass of milk, a cupcake and the radio adventures of Superman.

Others found Superman for the first time in the Kirk Alyn movie serials or the Fleisher Studio cartoons. And then, there was Marv Wolfman who found Superman on television. "Superman was a part of my childhood," he tells me. "I grew up watching the television series and then discovered comics. Superman was then—and now—my favorite character."

Marv grew up wanting to be an artist but found out his strength lay behind the typewriter and he started writing mystery stories for me and Joe Orlando. Of course, he wanted to write super-heroes and eventually he got his chance with a book called TEEN TITANS. Ever since, he's been one of our top writers.

When Marv took on Superman in the early 1980s, he was extremely happy. "Writing ACTION was a great experience, especially working with Julie Schwartz," Marv says. He got spoiled working with our top artists like Gil Kane and Curt Swan. His other commitments forced Marv to give up Superman after a while but he managed to do an occasional story or two, like this spring's super-werewolf in SUPERMAN.

Now Marv is ready to return to Superman. He is one of the architects, along with editor Andy Helfer and colleague John Byrne, on the revamping of Superman. For the last year he has been pouring over concepts, ideas, characters and events with the other two and he has been positively beaming.

One thing that helped convince Marv the time was right for him to write his interpretation of Superman was Lex Luthor. You heard me. You see, Marv really had this nifty concept for Lex and wanted that to be one of the cornerstones of the new series. John, Andy and I readily agreed and the Lex you see now is Marv's. I've gotta admit, he looks a lot better in a three-piece suit than prison grays or that battle armor.

Marv will be debuting in October with ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN #424 and illustrating that series will be penciller Jerry Ordway. "I always read Superman as a kid," Jerry says from his Milwaukee studio. "I then sort of forgot about him until I started working for DC in 1980. There, I rediscovered Superman and really got to like him all over again.

"It was fun drawing him for Roy Thomas in ALL-STAR SQUADRON and I found him simpler and more interesting as a character since Roy was working from the original Siegel and Shuster stories. I tried then and I will try now to retain the flavor of Joe's art. The look was everything back then and they caught it really well in the animated cartoons of the 1940s. The look was great with that accentuated jaw. He was neat!"

Not only is Jerry having a ball drawing the stories, but he is truly enjoying standing behind the concepts of Superman. "Oh yeah," he says with a laugh. "It's corny but neat and I really believe that he stands for Truth, Justice and the American Way."

One thing that I found interesting is Jerry's admission that, artistically, he wanted his Man of Steel to have something in common with Jack Kirby's interpretation. "I like what Jack did with Superman in JIMMY OLSEN, the handling and the approach. I want to add some of that to my stories."

In that first story, Marv and Jerry introduce a new threat named Man of War and a new supporting character Katherine Grant. "Not everything will be happening in the other Superman book," Marv says with pride. Marv has been working quite closely with Andy and John to make sure there is smoothness in continuity and approach. This will be seen in the one or two times a year all three Super-Titles will interconnect. And it will also show up in John's first issue of ACTION when Superman teams up with members of the NEW TEEN TITANS.

Marv, dipping back into his childhood again, plans to use a modern version of Inspector Henderson as Superman's contact with the Metropolis police force. He also intends on using King Faraday, one of our government agents, in ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN, since Marv also remembers him from the old DANGER TRAIL book we did in the 1950s. Faraday, readers may recall, has also been a recurring character in NEW TEEN TITANS.

"This is definitely the Superman I have always wanted to write," he says happily. As we talk, he's watching an episode of the old George Reeves TV series. Ever since he moved to the West Coast in February, Marv has been catching up on those old episodes reliving some childhood memories and firing himself up for the task ahead.

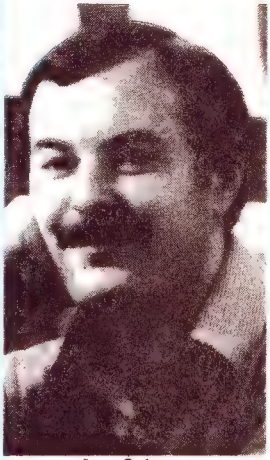
"We're going to produce a set of Superman books that I think will please not only the fans, but all of us as well, and that's really important. If we don't like what we write, then it's not worth doing," he adds.

I agree and from looking at Jerry's pencils, it's going to be an exciting series. Inking those pencils will be Jerry's longtime studio companion, Mike Machlan. Their collaborations on ALL-STAR and INFINITY, INC. prove they are a winning combination.

And yeah, I agree with Jerry. It may be corny but when you get down to it, Superman really is all about Truth, Justice and the American Way.

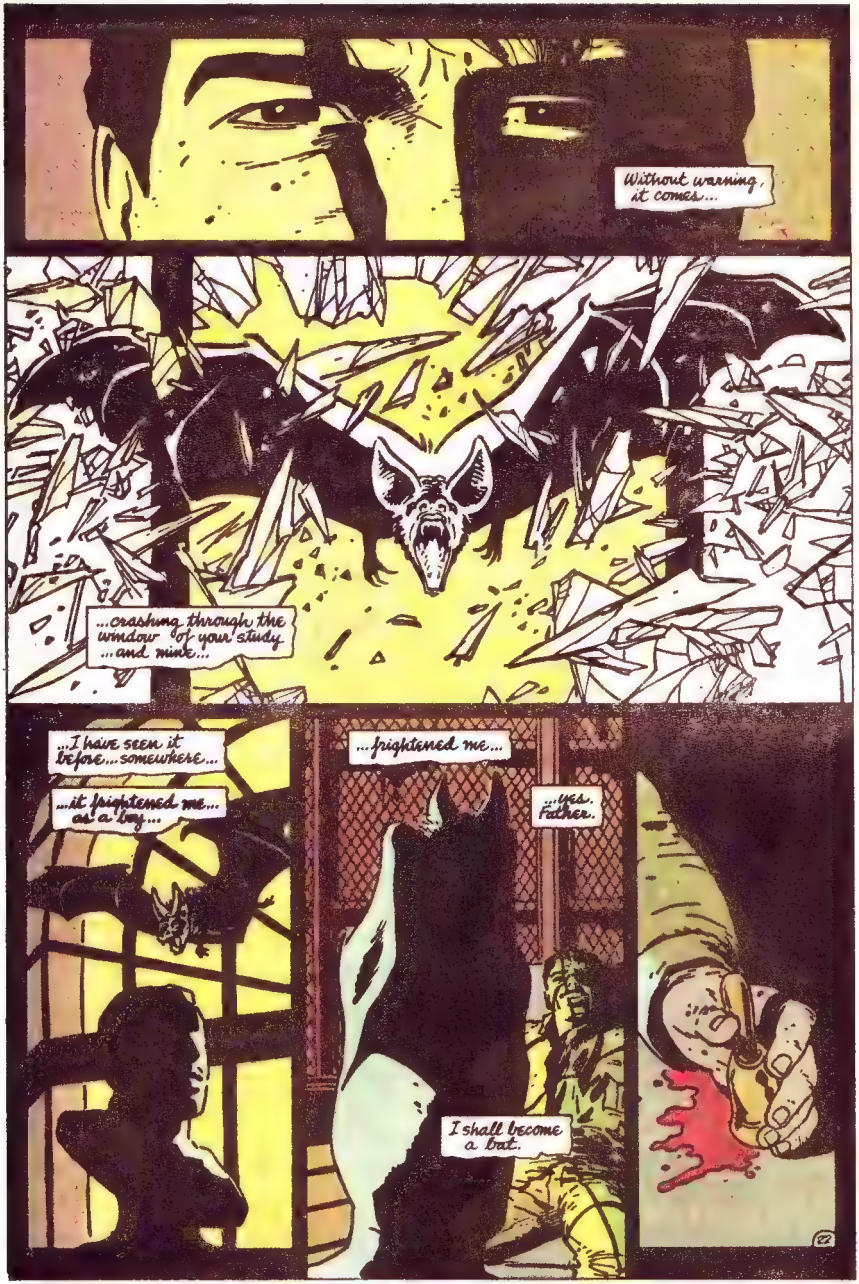
Thank You and Good Afternoon.

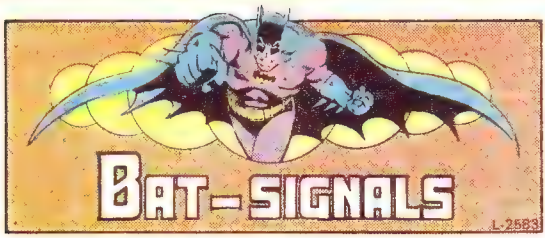
Dick



Jerry Ordway

...eighteen years ... since...
...since Zorro.
The Mark of Zorro.
Since the walk. That night.
And the man with frightened, hollow eyes and a voice like glass being crushed...
...since all sense left my life.


Without warning, it comes...
...crashing through the window of your study ...and mine...
...I have seen it before...somewhere...
...it frightened me... as a boy...
...frightened me...
...yes, Father.
I shall become a bat.



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Dear Dennis,

Since BATMAN #401 is a LEGENDS cross-over and has the charismatic Glorious Godfrey as a guest-star, I think I know what LEGENDS is going to be about, so here it goes.

Darkseid has sent Godfrey to Earth in order to make people turn against their heroes. Godfrey, being the charismatic person that he is, has no problem with this (as seen on page 11, panel 2). Earth's peoples will begin to distrust their heroes and I believe the heroes will begin to mistrust each other, and even themselves. During this turmoil, Darkseid will strike.

I believe this series will bring out the true meaning of what a hero is, and what makes up a hero. Unfortunately, I expect some heroes won't take the strain and will switch sides of the law. Thank you for your time.

Bob Davidson
172 Talmadge Dr.
Springfield, MA 01118

P.S. In MAN OF STEEL #3, Batman had the golden age insignia on his chest, and in 401 he had the modern-day one. Which one survived the CRISIS?

Many (that's the understatement of the year, Randall!) astute (Hah! Trying to butter them up so they won't think it was a goof, eh?) readers have pointed out the disparity between the two Batmans (She's stalling—she hasn't got a good answer, just watch!) who met Magpie.

Evil tight-shoe-making Brownies crept into Production one night just before we sent the book to the printer, and took what they did! Yellow circles, everywhere! (Lame, girl, lame...) Actually, the circle makes its exit this issue, so the change really starts here, sort of. Trust me. Just don't think about it, O.K.? Just enjoy this wonderful series—aren't those Miller and Mazzucchelli guys doing great?

* * * * *

Dear Denny, etc.,

I guess, Denny, it's all your fault. You're just too d*** good. I got BATMAN #400 simply because of all the collaborations. Then I read Dick's *Meanwhile* column and decided to get #401. Well, #402 has Max Collins, acclaimed mystery writer (and "Jim"Starlin"), so I guess I'll have to buy that ... #403 has Collins again . . uh . . #404-407 has Miller ...: uh.

Listen, Den, if you keep getting all these great people, I may be forced to become a regular buyer of BATMAN, and it's all your fault.

Ethan Kalett
Brooklyn, NY

I think Denny should have lots more faults like you, Ethan, and they should all write letters.

* * * * *

Bat Friends

BATMAN #401 put chills down my spine and made me break out into a cold sweat.

What was it that caused me to do this, you may ask. Was it the cover by John Byrne or the story written by Barbara Randall and illustrated by Trevor Von Eeden?

No, it was neither of these.

I had just glanced at the cover briefly, and hadn't even looked at the story yet. What was it, then, that caused this unusual reaction?

Well, instinctively, for the past several weeks, my first order of business in reading BATMAN has been to turn directly to the letters page, wherein I would scan for news of upcoming Bat events. It was here that I had first learned of the Dark Knight's miniseries, details of the blockbuster Batman anniversary issue, the upcoming Batman's First Year and Brian Bolland's graphic novel. In this month's letters page I was pleased to find an introduction by new Batman editor Denny O'Neil.

It was this that caused me to quiver in excitement and anticipation, as well as the previously described reaction.

It is apparent that Denny intends to return Batman's characterization to that of the avenger and protector of the rain-slick city streets of the asphalt jungle which bore him. Now, imagine my elation when I turned the page to find a pin-up by Brian Bolland (who, in his chapter in BATMAN #400 has replaced Neal Adams as my favorite Bat-artist) and my favorite quote of Raymond Chandler's (who has written a few hard-boiled tales of his own). I assume it was Editor O'Neil's selection to supplement Brian's beautiful artwork with this quote. *(Yes.—BJR)* It wouldn't surprise me that that good judgment came from Denny; of all the writers who have tackled the Batman over the years since the original Kane/Finger collaborations, it is only Denny who has captured the true essence of the character. His classic tales beautifully embellished by Neal Adams will forever stand in my mind as the definitive Batman.

I guess what I am trying to say here is that I'm a little bit excited about where Batman is headed.

In parting I would like to make just a little suggestion (as if Denny needs any advice on how to do Batman) that you continue to let different writers and artists take a crack at Batman. Batman is a character who just seems to bring out the best in everybody. In the past I have particularly enjoyed stories written by Steve Englehart, David V. Reed, Mike Barr, Denny (of course), and currently Frank Miller. On the artistic side, I've really enjoyed Neal Adams, Marshall Rogers, Michael Golden, Walt Simonson, Paul Gulacy, Howard Chaykin and Berni Wrightson. Any chance we might see one or two of these fellows' work in the future? Perhaps even Denny himself could pen a few issues. Pretty please?

Well, anyways, congratulations, Denny—long may you reign.

Scott A. Caywood
1117 Alrita Ct. #3
Madison, WI 53713

For the time being, we're keeping Denny busy writing THE QUESTION, soon to come your way with some lovely art by Denys Cowan and Rick Magyar. None of the artists you've mentioned will be drawing Batman in the near future, but I think you'll enjoy the work of our new Bat-artist, due to debut in BATMAN #408. His name? Wait and see.

* * * * *

Dear Mr. O'Neil,

As I told your predecessor, I would return to BATMAN only under certain circumstances. Those circumstances have been met and I am back, hopefully to stay. Let me welcome you back to BATMAN. This was a title you always seemed to do your best on.

As for your first offering as an Editor, it was a distinct improvement over what has gone recently. Not perfect, mind you, but a distinct improvement.

Magpie shows the potential of becoming one of the feature's more interesting adversaries, provided she continues to grow and is not allowed to stagnate from neglect or indifference.

Barbara J. Randall's script was nicely done, and the plotting and pacing reminded me of the style of storytelling used in the old Batman TV show, only played straight. This was a refreshing

change of pace, but I don't think it would be a good idea to use it too often.

The art, I fear, was a different matter. Trevor Von Eeden's inking grew more and more loose as the story progressed. Whether this was a matter of a looming deadline or an artistic choice of style, the effect was detrimental to the whole. If this is a conscious choice on Von Eeden's part, someone should tell him that he isn't Alex Toth, and that he shouldn't try these things until he's learned what Alex Toth has learned.

It was a good first issue overall, sir. Just don't rest on your laurels.

Bill Kropfhauser
1792 Washington Ave.
Columbus, OH 43207

°°°°°

Dear Dennis:

I just finished reading BATMAN #401 and am sorry to say that for the first time in a long time I did *not* enjoy the book.

Barbara told a good story—it did hold my attention, but Magpie is a silly villain. She is played like a campy villain from the '60s Batman TV show. Barbara, you do a disservice to a great villain when you compare this flake to the Joker. Yes, she is a wanton killer and bizarre, BUT she does not show an "incredible amount of brainpower"! She is just a nut with a punk outfit who thinks all the "beautiful sparkly things" in the world are hers. Don't bring her back!

I also did not like the art—it was too much 1940s and 1950s. The colors were too severe. The drawings were almost amateurish.

I guess I have been spoiled by Doug Moench, Tom Mandrake and Paul Gulacy. I'm sure you will improve on this. This is too good a title to let slide.

I'm looking forward to BATMAN: YEAR ONE and BATMAN: YEAR TWO with anticipation. I'm sure you won't disappoint me.

Bob Daniels
Albany, NY

Sorry you weren't happy with #401, and I'm glad you looked forward to this issue—so did I, and you'll have to let us know if it was what you expected.

°°°°°

Dear Barbara,

I'm also intrigued by what makes a character tick, what makes them do what they do, what makes them who they are, and BATMAN #401 provided ample chances to see such thoughts at work.

The most obvious character to point out is Magpie. This woman ties with the Joker for sheer lunacy, even if their lunacy takes them in different directions. Magpie doesn't kill for the joy of killing, she kills to "punish", even if such punishment is incredibly misguided. The catch here is that she actually believes what she's doing is right, is okay. The Joker knows what he's doing is wrong, but does it anyway.

The second most interesting character I've found is G. Gorden Godfrey. Anyone who doesn't recognize him as Darkseid's minion Glorious Godfrey hasn't been reading their *Who's Whos* of late. It seems Godfrey's found a new tact—turning the world against superheroes, and this is obviously the LEGENDS tie-in of the issue.

Overall, I found the issue enjoyable and intriguing (especially figuring out just how Magpie would get the jewels—all of my guesses were wrong), and this is high praise, coming from one who doesn't read BATMAN regularly anymore.

Anthony R. Cardno
238 Center Drive
Mahopac, NY 10541

If you don't read BATMAN anymore, then how did you know what happened in ... Naw, never mind. I don't want to know. Hope you're enjoying Godfrey's further exploits in LEGENDS, and speaking of Legends, here's the last word from someone who thinks we've desecrated one:

°°°°°

Hullo,

BATMAN #401, chapter one of LEGENDS. Sorry; boys and girls ... this is lame. Trevor Von Eeden just doesn't make it, and the script ... I'd call it bad, but I don't want to give it that much credit.

A rather gloomy start for such a major project, don't you think? I find it hard to believe this is the same villain (Magpie) who appeared in MAN OF STEEL #3. She was wicked there, she's a goofball here. Don't get me wrong ... I don't want the talented Mr. Byrne working on either Bat-book ... I mean, he's okay at what he does, but this is just not his sort of book. His Batman would be little better than what I just read.

I've heard about the upcoming infusion of fresh blood, and I'll be here for it ... but it better be better than BATMAN #401, or I'll be spending my money elsewhere.

M.A.D.
Rt. 1, Box 1
Trinity, TX 75862

Oh, well ... win some, lose some. See you all next month, until then, so long, and don't forget to mail early...

—Barbara

FROM THE DEN

Barb's just dashed in and said this space needs to be filled—now. Today. Before lunch. Bad timing, because I'm trying to get this issue out, get the introduction to the forthcoming *Dark Knight* paperback written, plot DETECTIVE #573 with Mike W. Barr and leave early so I can hop a bus to Cape May where I hope to bake on the beach for a few days, recovering from the busy, exciting, busy, informative, busy, exhausting, busy and busy conventions in Atlanta and San Diego.

So I've got time only to hope you're enjoying "Batman: Year One" as much as we are and to announce that next issue, with mighty fanfare, I'll (finally) tell the world who'll be taking over BATMAN after Miller and Mazzucchelli finish their history-making stint.

Till then—

DENNY

HEY, DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THAT NEW "ANGEL LOVE" COMIC BOOK?
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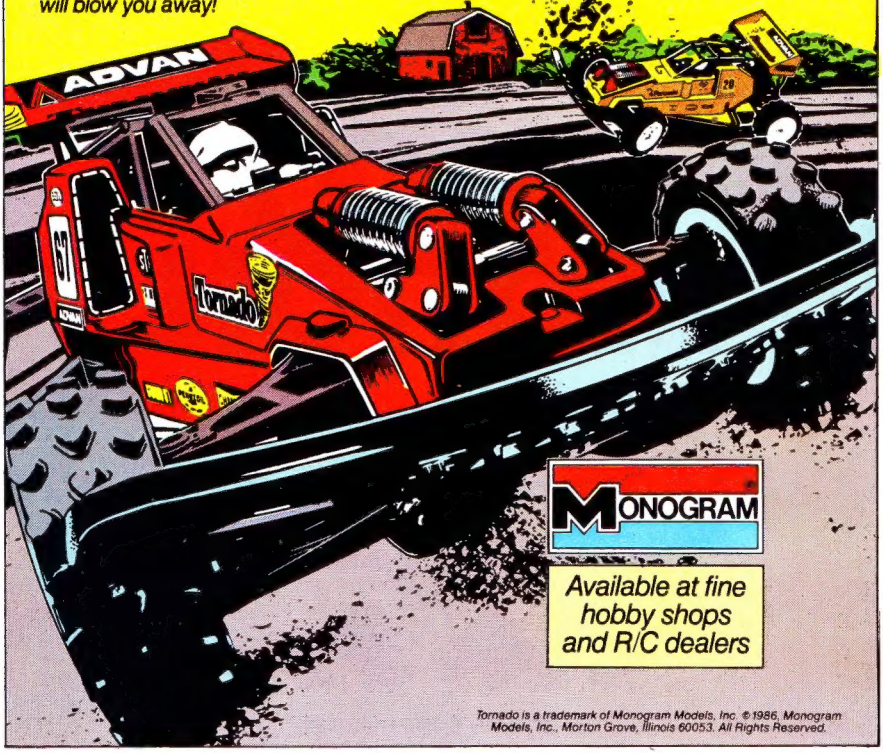

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